



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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WENDY L. WATANABE
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

July 10, 2013

TO: Audit Committee

FROM: Wendy L. Watanabe
Auditor-Controller

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Wendy L. Watanabe", is written over the printed name and title.

SUBJECT: **SUNSET REVIEW FOR THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY CONSUMER
AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMISSION**

RECOMMENDATION

The Audit Committee recommend to the Board of Supervisors (Board) to extend the Los Angeles County Consumer Affairs Advisory Commission's (CAAC or Commission) sunset review date to June 30, 2017.

BACKGROUND

The Board established and has continued the Commission pursuant to Los Angeles County Code Chapter 3.13. The Board approved the most recent extension in October 2011.

The Commission's duties include:

- Determining the needs of consumers and advising the Director of the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA or Department) of its findings.
- Advising the DCA Director on consumer protection matters and consumer interests.
- Advising the DCA Director of the need for changes in procedures, programs, or legislation to further consumers' interests.
- Consulting with the DCA Director on methods for more effective consumer education.

- Reporting on matters referred for review by the DCA Director or the Board.
- Reporting annually to the DCA Director and the Board on Commission activities.

The CAAC has 15 members, three appointed by each Supervisor. The Commission is required to meet six times per year, and commissioners serve without compensation. The DCA estimates that they spent approximately \$8,000 for Commission staff support, services, and supplies during Fiscal Year 2011-12.

JUSTIFICATION

From January 2011 to December 2012, the Commission met 13 times (approximately seven times per year), with an average attendance of 6.3 (64%) of the 9.9 filled positions. The Commission also averaged 5.1 (34%) unfilled positions during the review period, and indicated that it will work with the Board to fill vacancies.

The Commission is fulfilling its duties. During the review period, the CAAC's accomplishments included advising DCA to:

- Establish Facebook and Twitter accounts to alert consumers about current scams and to share important consumer information. DCA established these accounts in June 2012.
- Enhance the Department's website with information about new foreclosure laws, and how consumers can benefit from the Do-Not-Call Registry to avoid unwanted text messages. DCA began updating its website in October 2012.
- Develop a financial literacy service to educate new and future homeowners on how to make informed financial decisions and avoid foreclosure. DCA is evaluating a program that would provide this service to homeowners.
- Emphasize consumer education and public outreach services. DCA created a new Consumer Education and Public Outreach Unit in September 2012 that is working to increase the Department's focus in these areas. For example, DCA indicated it has improved its consumer education efforts by increasing the number of visits and speaking engagements at local senior centers.

The CAAC's objectives for the next review period are to continue developing recommendations for the DCA Director on DCA operations and high-priority consumer topics, including foreclosures, volunteers/interns, public information, strategic planning, and funding opportunities. The Commission also plans to develop an administrative manual to continue to ensure commissioner activities are in line with the Commission's mission.

Please call me if you have any questions, or your staff may contact Robert Smythe at (213) 253-0101.

WLW:RS:MP

Attachment

c: Dionne Faulk, Chair, Consumer Affairs Advisory Commission
Brian J. Stiger, Director, Department of Consumer Affairs
Angie Johnson, Chief, Commission Services

COMMISSION SUNSET REVIEW
LOS ANGELES COUNTY CONSUMER AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMISSION
REVIEW COMMENTS

Mission. (Does the mission statement agree with the Board of Supervisors' (Board) purpose and expectations?)

The stated mission is as set forth in the ordinance establishing the Los Angeles County Consumer Affairs Advisory Commission (CAAC or Commission).
CONCUR.

Section 1. Relevance. (Is the mission still relevant and in agreement with the Board of Supervisors' purpose and expectations?)

The CAAC advises and provides support to the Director of the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA or Department) on the interests and concerns of consumers.

The Commission's mission appears to be **RELEVANT.**

Section 2. Meetings and Attendance. (Are required meetings held and is attendance satisfactory?)

The CAAC met 13 times between January 2011 and December 2012 (approximately seven times per year), with an average attendance of 6.3 (64%) of the 9.9 filled positions. We also noted that an average 5.1 (34%) of the 15 CAAC positions were vacant throughout the review period. The CAAC indicated that it will work with the Board to fill vacancies.

The Commission's meeting frequency and commissioner attendance are **SATISFACTORY.**

Sections 3 and 4. Accomplishments and Results. (Are listed accomplishments and results significant?)

During the review period, the CAAC's accomplishments included advising the DCA to:

- Establish Facebook and Twitter accounts to alert consumers about current scams and to share important consumer information. DCA established these accounts in June 2012.
- Enhance the Department's website with information about new foreclosure laws, and how consumers can benefit from the Do-Not-Call Registry to avoid unwanted text messages. DCA began updating its website in October 2012.

- Develop a financial literacy service to educate new and future homeowners on how to make informed financial decisions and avoid foreclosure. DCA is evaluating a program that would provide this service to homeowners.
- Emphasize consumer education and public outreach services. DCA created a new Consumer Education and Public Outreach Unit in September 2012 that is working to increase the Department's focus in these areas. For example, DCA indicated it has improved its consumer education efforts by increasing the number of visits and speaking engagements at local senior centers.

The Commission's accomplishments and results are **SIGNIFICANT**.

Section 5. Objectives. (Are the objectives compatible with the mission and goals and relevant within the current County environment?)

The CAAC's objectives for the next review period are to continue developing recommendations for the DCA Director on DCA operations and high-priority consumer topics, including foreclosures, volunteers/interns, public information, strategic planning, and funding opportunities. The Commission also plans to develop an administrative manual to continue to ensure commissioner activities are in line with the Commission's mission.

The Commission's future objectives appear **RELEVANT**.

Section 6. Resources. (Are the resources utilized by the entity in support of the entity's activities warranted in terms of the accomplishments and results?)

CAAC members are not compensated for their service. The DCA estimates that they spent approximately \$8,000 for CAAC staff support, services, and supplies during Fiscal Year 2011-12.

The Commission's expenses appear to be **WARRANTED**.

Section 7. Recommendation.

**EXTEND THE SUNSET REVIEW DATE FOR THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY
CONSUMER AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMISSION TO JUNE 30, 2017.**

